

The University of Chicago

THE INFLUENCE OF
ROMANCES ON TOURNAMENTS OF
THE MIDDLE AGES

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
AUGUST, 1939

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THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANCES ON TOURNAMENTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

By RUTH HUFF CLINE

THOUGH authorities on tournaments and similar combats have been aware that by the middle of the fourteenth century tournaments had begun to lose their real vigor and were seeking their motifs in tournaments described in literature, notably Arthurian, they have not observed the extent nor early beginnings of this imitation.¹ It is my purpose to show that tournaments found their models in literature even during the first half of the thirteenth century and continued to do so increasingly to the end of the Middle Ages.

Perhaps the most significant imitation of romance in the Middle Ages was that of the round table.² Though the nature of the first two round tables mentioned in history is not known, the later association of the sport with Arthur leaves little doubt that these tables were of Arthurian origin.³ The first round table that has attracted general interest among scholars is that of 1279 held by Roger Mortimer at Kenilworth. Mr Hulbert says that 'Roger Mortimer is the first person who is known to have held such festivities.'⁴ Miss Giffin has used Mortimer's round table in order to show that Mortimer was attempting to establish his line of descent from King Arthur.⁵

In 1242, forty-five years before Mortimer's round table, Henry III forbade the nobles' taking part in a round table while he was on a journey to settle differences with his brother-in-law, Llewelyn, Prince of North Wales and Lord of Snowdon.⁶ One would like to believe that this proposed round table was to have taken place

¹ F. H. Cripps-Day, *The History of the Tournament in England and in France* (London, 1918), *passim*, and R. C. Clephan, *The Tournament: Its Periods and Phases* (London, 1919), *passim*.

² Though the nature of the round table will become clearer as the discussion progresses, a brief indication of its distinguishing characteristics follows. According to Cripps-Day the four features which distinguish the round table from the tournament are (1) that the round table was purely a pastime for sport, (2) that it was a series of jousts which took place on a circular field, (3) that arms of courtesy, that is, blunted weapons, were used, and (4) that round table sports were always followed by the feasting of the guests at the expense of the noble who *entreprised* the fête (*op. cit.*, pp. 15-16). Perhaps the first feature mentioned is of little significance since tournaments, likewise, were ordinarily held for sport. Furthermore, the last feature of Cripps-Day's definition is not well supported by information obtainable concerning early round tables. The second and third features seem to be the only essential features for distinguishing the round table from the tournament.

³ See below, pp. 207-208.

⁴ James R. Hulbert, 'A Hypothesis Concerning the Alliterative Revival,' *Modern Philology*, xxviii (1931), 417-418. Mr Hulbert mentions in a footnote an earlier round table occurring in 1252. He mistakenly says that Matthew Paris does not mention any of the participants in this round table. For the names of the combatants, see below, p. 206. Cf. Clephan, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵ Mary E. Giffin, 'Cadwalader, Arthur, and Brutus in the Wigmore Manuscript,' *SPECULUM*, xvi (1941), 109-120. Unfortunately for Miss Giffin's argument, the round table was known by 1279 both on the continent and in England and practiced by knights and lords of various countries; consequently, Roger Mortimer could scarcely have undertaken a round table with the hope of impressing his contemporaries with his Arthurian connections.

⁶ *Patent Rolls*, 1232, A.D., p. 492.

in Wales where the Arthurian tradition was well known, but in the absence of evidence no such conclusion can be drawn.

Another round table, occurring in 1235, shows that this form of combat was known not only in England but also in Flanders. On this occasion knights from Flanders and elsewhere convened at Hesdin and after participating in a round table pledged themselves to a crusade.¹ Since, as we shall see later, the round table had Arthurian associations, Flanders was a likely spot for such an adventure as this.² The Arthurian tradition was not unknown to the counts of Flanders. Philip of Flanders, who died in 1190, as the patron of Chrétien de Troyes, had commanded Chrétien to write the *Perceval* and had furnished him his source.³ Furthermore, that interest in chivalric deeds continued in Flanders to the end of the Middle Ages is well borne out by Olivier de la Marche.⁴

Shortly after this round table at Hesdin, in 1240 to be exact, Ulrich von Liechtenstein, a minstrel knight of Bavaria, instituted another round table of a slightly different sort. In this instance the term *round table* was applied not to the joust but to the jousts, who were allowed to become members of the round table if

¹ *Alberici monachi Trium Fontium chronicon* (Accessiones historicae: scriptores rerum Germanicarum, ed. by G. G. Leibnitz, Hanover, 1700), II, 555.

² Hesdin had come into the possession of the kings of France in 1180 on the marriage of Philip of France to Elizabeth, daughter of Count Baldwin V of Hainaut ('Ex Gisleberti Montensis praepositi Hannoniae chronico,' *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Paris, 1869, XIII, 580). It had, however, been a bone of contention between the counts of Flanders and the kings of France for a number of years after 1180. (Petit-Dutaillis, *Étude sur la vie et le règne de Louis VIII (1187-1226)*, Paris, 1894, pp. 18-22.) Two years after our tournament, when Robert of Artois, the brother of Louis IX, married, he was made Count of Artois and, among other places, Lord Hesdin ('Ex epitome Andreae Silvii Prioris Marchianensis,' *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. Leopold Delisle, Paris, 1879, XVIII, 559). This territory had belonged to his mother, Blanche, who was given an equivalent when it went into the hands of Robert (*Layettes du trésor des chartres*, ed. by A. Teulet and de Laborde, Paris, 1866, II, 349).

³ J. D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance from the Beginnings down to the Year 1300* (Baltimore, 1923), I, 219-220.

⁴ *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche maître d'hôtel et Capitaine des gardes de Charles le Téméraire* (Société de l'histoire de France, Paris, 1883), I, 290, II, 52, 83, 96, 129, 141, 204, 211, III, 108. Furthermore, the king of France himself, Louis VIII, to whom Hesdin at the time of this tournament belonged, was unusually well versed in belles-lettres. His mother, Isabel of Hainaut, through pride in her Carolingian ancestry (Petit-Dutaillis, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13), caused Louis to be imbued with the Carolingian literary tradition, as well as in belles-lettres in general, seemingly including Arthurian literature. Rigord says that he dedicated his *Gesta Philippi-Augusti* to Louis because of Louis' literary interests (*Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton, historiens de Philippe-Auguste*, 'Société de l'histoire de France,' Paris, 1882-1885, I, 1-4). Guillaume le Breton likewise dedicated his *Philippide* to Louis (*Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, II, pp. 1-4). Guillaume in his work assumes a knowledge of Arthurian characters (*ibid.*, II, pp. 30, 224).

Speculation as to the occasion of this tournament, though somewhat idle, is of interest here. In 1235 Jeanne, Countess of Flanders and Hainaut, betrothed her daughter Marie to Robert, the brother of King Louis of France. As dowry Robert was to give Marie Hesdin and the castle with all its appurtenances (Teulet, *op. cit.*, II, 294). Since tournaments were held on such occasions as betrothals, marriages, and baptisms, a tournament at Hesdin celebrating the compact would have been most appropriate. It would have been particularly appropriate in this instance because a part of the very territory, which Jeanne and her husband Ferrand had been attempting to secure from Louis of France, was now to come into the possession of their daughter Marie.

they were able to 'play' three spears with Ulrich without missing.¹ The Arthurian character of these jousts is indisputable as we shall see later.²

One other round table, which took place before the well known round table of Kenilworth, gives us further information about its nature. At this one, which occurred at Wallenden in 1252, knights assembled from the north and south of England and from the continent. Matthew Paris, the thirteenth-century historian, tells us that this was not the sport vulgarly called *tournament* but the chivalric sport of the *round table*. One of the ways in which this 'chivalrous sport' differed from the tournament was in its use of the blunted weapons. Paris' anger is aroused because at the Wallenden tournament, Roger de Lumburn, through his failure to use a blunted weapon, killed his opponent, Arnold de Montigny.³

For further clarification of the nature and origin of the round table we may turn to two romances of the period, *The Prose Tristan* (about 1232) and *Sone de Nausay* (1235). Both of these romances have thrust into their midst material which appears to serve as propaganda against the barbarities of the ordinary tournament. The *Prose Tristan* written about the time of Henry III's prohibition of a round table in 1232 states that the banner of the round table is not that of mortal battle.⁴ Likewise, *Sone de Nausay* insists, as if the matter were not generally understood, that the round table was a strictly regulated joust.⁵ These two romances bear out the conclusion that one may draw from Matthew Paris that the round table was a better regulated form of combat than the ordinary tournament.

If one remembers that Philip Augustus made his sons Louis and Robert promise not to take part in tournaments because of the danger of then,⁶ and, furthermore, if one remembers the general feeling against the barbarities of the tournament,⁷ one will not find it difficult to imagine that in order to establish a better regulated tournament, nobles appealed to the tradition of Arthurian chivalry. In fact, more and more as men realized that feudalism was dead, did they attempt

¹ Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *Frauendienst*, ed. Reinhold Bechstein (Leipzig, 1888), stanza 1429; cf. *ibid.*, stanza 1458. ² See below, pp. 207-208.

³ Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. H. R. Luard ('Rolls Series'; London, 1872-1883), v, 318-319.

⁴ *Le roman en prose de Tristan*, ed. E. Löseth (Paris, 1891), p. 139.

⁵ *Sone von Nausay*, ed. Moritz Goldschmidt ('Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart'; Tübingen, 1899), vv. 14149-14152.

⁶ Nain de Tillemont, *Vie de Saint Louis*, ed. J. de Gaulle (La société de l'histoire de France; Paris, 1849), i, 12.

⁷ The church from the very beginning opposed tournaments because of their barbarities and issued prohibitions against them on the following dates: 1131 (Joannes Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum, Venetiis*, 1776, Canon, xii, pp. 460-461); 1139 (*ibid.*, Canon, xiv, p. 530); 1179 (*ibid.*, Canon, xx, p. 229). Though the general prohibitions issued by the church after the twelfth century tended to emphasize other causes for the denial of tournaments than the brutality of these combats, the French kings, like the church, opposed tournaments on the grounds of the destruction of men and horses (*Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race*, ed. M. de Laurière, Paris, 1723, i, 643-644). In England the Statuta Armorum formulated in 1295 by the English nobility attempted to establish rules for lessening the brutality of the tournaments. (Record Commission, *The Statutes of the Realm*, i, 231). For a fuller treatment of this subject, see Ruth Cline, 'Tournaments of English and French Literature Compared with those of History, 1100 to 1500' (Unpublished doctor's dissertation of the University of Chicago, 1939), pp. 46-50.

to revive the glories that they believed attended it, through an appeal to Arthurian tradition. Consequently, it may well be that the appeal to Arthurian chivalry had begun to be used for a specific purpose even as early as this.

By the time of the next recorded round table, that held by Roger Mortimer at Kenilworth in 1279, the round table, as has already been observed, was known and practiced from England to Bavaria. Mortimer's round table, however, appears to have been more than usually festive. For this occasion a hundred knights and as many ladies rode to Kenilworth singing songs. At the end of the festivities the bravest knight was rewarded with the prize of a golden lion.¹ Mr Hulbert says of this entertainment that chroniclers 'state that the term "round table" was derived from the fact that the place of jousting was surrounded by a wall; but as that fact does not account for the use of the word "table" an association with Arthur is fairly certain.'²

Shortly after Mortimer's round table, Edward I, in 1284, celebrated his conquest of Wales by holding a round table in Carnarvonshire where the knights of England and the continent fought. At this time Edward was presented with the crown of Arthur, which luckily had just been discovered.³

Though round tables continued to be practiced to the end of the Middle Ages, they reached their peak in 1344 when King Edward III undertook a round table at Windsor in order to imitate chivalry as he believed it to have existed in the days of King Arthur and his knights. Froissart says that at this time Edward wished to rebuild the great castle of Windsor where King Arthur's round table was founded from which so many valiant knights went out and did deeds of prowess.⁴ For this celebration the king sent his heralds with invitations into Burgundy, Hainault, Scotland, Flanders, Brabant, and Germany. Two kings, two queens, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cornwall, ten earls, nine countesses and many other people of importance attended the celebration. After the tournament the king began to rebuild at Windsor Park a house which he called a round table. It was two hundred feet in diameter. Likewise, sometime before 1356 he had a circular table built for which fifty two oaks were used. This round table was soon imitated by the French king.⁵

It is clear then that by the middle of the fourteenth century the practice of the round table, having its roots in Arthurian tradition, was widespread in England and on the continent. In addition to round tables, tournaments sought to imitate other features of romance both Arthurian and non-Arthurian. Four tournaments of the thirteenth century imitated other features of Arthurian romance than the round table.

In two of these tournaments, combatants took the part of Arthurian charac-

¹ John Smyth, *Lives of the Berkeleys*, ed. Sir John Maclean (Gloucester, 1883), I, 147; cf. Thomas of Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley (London, 1863), I, 19.

² J. R. Hulbert, 'A Hypothesis Concerning the Alliterative Revival,' *Modern Philology*, xxviii (1931), 418. — ³ T. F. Tout, *Edward the First* (London, 1893), p. 117.

⁴ *Oeuvres de Froissart*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels, 1868), iv, 203-204.

⁵ Thomas of Walsingham, *Ypodigma Neustriæ*, ed. H. T. Riley ('Rolls Series'; London, 1876), p. 282.

ters. In the 'Artusfahrt' (1240), Ulrich von Liechtenstein took the part of Arthur and jousted with various knights: Lancelot, Ivain, Tristan, Erec, and Perceval.¹ Likewise almost forty years later another tournament at which Arthurian characters were present was undertaken by the Sires of Longheval at the castle of Ham-sur-Somme in order to foster honor, prowess, largesse, and courtesy, which were then decaying.² An English lady, Queen Guinevere, was there with seven hundred knights, ladies and maidens³; Kex the seneschal, the Chevalier au Lyon and other Arthurian knights were present.⁴

Ulrich von Lichtenstein employed other Arthurian devices in his numerous feats of arms. In 1225 at Freisach after a day of jousting, Ulrich decided that he would mystify the knights next day by disappearing from the jousts, going to the city, and returning in entirely different apparel. This he did. In the city, he had himself and eleven boys, who were to accompany him, and his horse all clothed in green.⁵ This incident recalls very definitely the disappearance and disguise of the knight in the three-day tournament of romance.⁶ Likewise at the jousts of the 'Artusfahrt' when Ulrich was preparing for a second joust with Herr Kadolt, a beautiful damsel rode across the lists to tell Ulrich that Herr Kadolt could joust no more.⁷ Such damsels bearing messages or lances into the fray appear frequently in romance both Arthurian and non-Arthurian.⁸

One incident which occurred in the thirteenth century, 1281, at Magdeburg not only adds to the evidence showing the firm hold Arthurian tradition had in many countries but also shows that it had spread to the common people. The Magdeburg Chronicle says that it was customary in the neighborhood of Magdeburg for Pentecost to be celebrated with such games as the Roland and round table games; those participating were the merchants and burghers. An unusual feature of this occasion was the setting up on the plain of a grail to be viewed by the guests on the second day of the festivities.⁹

A survey of the feats of arms described or mentioned above will show Arthurian imitations to have been widespread and well entrenched in England and on the continent by the end of the fourteenth century. Before the middle of the thirteenth century the round table had been undertaken twice on the continent, once at Hesdin in 1235, and once in 1240 in Bavaria. In Britain by the middle of the fourteenth century five such round tables had taken place culminating in the Windsor tournament of 1344 and in the establishment of a permanent round table. Many more round tables must have occurred which historians did not take

¹ Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *op. cit.*, stanzas 1416, 1430, 1437, 1454, 1548, 1553.

² Sarrazin, 'Tournoi de Ham,' ed. F. Michel, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre* (Paris, 1840), p. 220.

³ Sarrazin, *op. cit.*, p. 232; cf. *ibid.*, p. xlix.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

⁵ Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *op. cit.*, stanzas 1416, 1430, 1437, 1454, 1548, 1553.

⁶ Dorothy E. Winters, 'The Three Days Combat,' (Unpublished dissertation of the University of Chicago, 1939), pp. 1-23.

⁷ Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *op. cit.*, stanza, 1541.

⁸ *Hue de Rotelande's Ipomedon*, ed. E. Kölbing and E. Koschwitz (Breslau, 1899) vv. 2637-2639, vv. 3711-3716; cf. *Der Karrenritter (Lancelot) und das Wilhelmsleben (Guillaume d'Angleterre) von Christian von Troyes*, ed. Wendelin Foerster (Halle, 1899), vv. 5656-5665.

⁹ Alwin Schultz, *Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger* (Leipzig, 1889), II, 117-118.

the trouble to set down. Furthermore, since continental history is not so fully recorded for this period as English history, the fact that only two round tables are recorded for the continent does not mean that the occurrence of round tables there was less frequent than in England. It is to be noted that the round table at Hesdin occurred only three years after the first mention of a round table in English records. Furthermore, Ulrich does not indicate that he is doing a new thing in instituting a round table. In addition to round tables, four other imitations of Arthurian romance took place on the continent; one such imitation occurred in 1225 and another in 1240, one at Ham-sur-Somme in 1278 and one at Magdeburg in 1281. It is clear then that Arthurian tradition influenced strongly the tournament in Britain and that of the continent during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Arthurian romances were not, however, the only romances which furnished motifs for the tournament. In fact, the earliest known imitation was probably drawn from the romance of Guy of Warwick. In this instance, in 1226, a knight, Waltman, made it known that he would joust in honor of his lady against all comers at Mercersberg. He promised to deliver as prizes to whoever overthrew him, his young lady, his palfrey, and his hawk, as well as his hound and harness. The young lady, however, was not, as in romance, to become the mistress of her captor, but free herself by the gift of a gold ring. Whomever Waltman conquered was to give him and his lady each a ring.¹ This incident recalls distinctly the situation in Guy of Warwick in which Guy offers his falcon, his milk-white steed, two hounds and the maiden herself.² The redemption by means of the rings may have been a necessary compromise because of the conventions of the time. Similarly a lady was the prize of the Magdeburg tournament in 1281. On this occasion an old merchant of Goslere won the girl but, providing her with a dowery, gave her away in marriage instead of keeping her as his mistress.³ Since in romance the lady as a prize of the tournament is almost a stock character,⁴ and since in the two instances just cited, a way out is provided for the lady, apparently for the sake of convention, it would appear that the romances are being imitated in these two combats.

Non-Arthurian literature also furnished motifs for the tournament which took place at Valenciennes in 1344. The prize, a peacock, and the names of the winning band of knights, those of Alexander's knights', suggest a romance about Alexander, such as *Les vœux du paon*.⁵

During the fifteenth century, though the old forms of imitation continued, several new elements, born of the Renaissance, were present in a number of tournaments. The most important of these were a pastoralism, similar to that found in Renaissance literature, and an allegorical element bearing the marks of Renaissance thought. For example, a description in *Le pas d'armes de la bergière*

¹ Schultz, *op. cit.*, II, 119.

² *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, ed. Julius Zupitza (EETSES, London, 1883), XLII, part I, vv. 819-836. It is to be noted that the French version is probably of the twelfth century.

³ Schultz, *op. cit.*, II, 117-118.

⁴ Ruth Cline, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-90.

⁵ Robert C. Clephan, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

shows that the pastoral literature of the Renaissance found expression in a joust cried for Phelippe de Lenoncourt and Philebert de L'Aigue. There at each end of the lists under a tree stood a 'gente pastourelle' guarding her 'brebiettes.' To each tree was attached a shield which those wishing to joust might strike.¹ Cripps-Day says of this *pas d'armes* that the whole setting was pastoral: the gallery was a thatched cottage, and the two challengers were shepherds.² The damsel, though she did not give out the lances to her love, reminds one of the *amie* who often went about with the knights in the tournaments of the romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³ Thus we find in this feat a combination of medieval and Renaissance motifs.

Another element, the allegorical element, though common in the Middle Ages, in its use in connection with tournaments has a decidedly Renaissance flavor. Allegory here has lost its seriousness of purpose and has become a mere plaything carrying with it an artificial air similar to that of pastoralism. The allegory is obvious in King René of Sicily's emprise of the dragon in which knights had to go through a narrow pass called 'la gueule du dragon.'⁴ Claude de Vauldray, in an elaborate tournament called himself 'le Compagnon de la Joyeuse Queste' and his mistress 'Dame Sauvaige.' He allegorizes his adventure in the following manner: 'Vray est que ledit entrepreneur, pour sa première bonne adventure, se partist, n'a pas gramment, du riche royaume d'Enfance, et entra en ung pays gasté, maigre et stérile, que on appelle Jonesse.'⁵ The description of the joust itself goes on in the same allegorical fashion.

On another occasion, in 1468, Jehan de Chassa, knight of Burgundy sends a letter to the ladies gathered at the marriage festivities of Margaret of York requesting permission to joust. He calls himself a slave knight born in the realm of slavery⁶ — in other words, he has long suffered from loving a lady without pity. Though the motif on which this allegory is based is common in medieval romance, the use it is put to here is more suggestive of the Renaissance spirit than of the medieval. At these same festivities, another knight calls himself the 'serviteur de la dame de l'Isle celee'⁷ — again certainly a device of the Middle Ages, but likewise Renaissance in its lightness and artificiality.

Though, as we have just seen, new elements entered into the imitative procedures of the tournament of the fifteenth century, other motifs continued to be sought as formerly in the literature of the Middle Ages.

A feat of arms, which was undertaken at Calais in 1416, by Richard Beauchamp against the Red Knight, the White Knight, and the Black Knight,⁸ was no doubt reminiscent of the three-day tournament of romance. In the last adventure at Sandricourt the participants imitated the knights errant of Arthur.⁹ Other fea-

¹ *Le pas d'armes de la bergière*, ed. G. A. Crapelet (Paris, 1828), vv. 54-89.

² F. H. Cripps-Day, *op. cit.* (London, 1918), 87. ³ See above, p. 208.

⁴ Wilson de la Colombière, *Le vray théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie* (Paris, 1648), I, 81.

⁵ *Traicté de la forme et devis comme on faict les tournois*, par Olivier de la Marche, Hardouin de la Jaille, Anthoine de la Sale, etc., ed. Bernard Prost (Paris, 1878), p. 58.

⁶ *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche*, III, 154-158.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁸ *The Pageants of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick*, ed. William Earl of Carysfort for the Roxburghe Club (Oxford, 1908), p. ix.

⁹ Colombière, *op. cit.*, I, 147-152.

tures, such as instituting a tournament for a lady secretly loved at René's tournament at Saumur for Jeanne de Laval may have had literary origins.¹ In 1467, when Lord Scales was leaving high mass, some ladies placed upon his thigh a gold 'collar' with a *flower of Souvenance*, thus requesting him to perform some great act of chivalry. Getting permission of the king, he challenged the Bastard of Burgundy to joust.² The extreme consciousness of chivalric motifs at such a late date suggests that this emphasis comes from the imitation of the romances. Especially is this a legitimate conclusion since, as was just shown, the knights did definitely attempt to model their tournaments on those of romance.

But the clearest expression of the completeness with which the period had turned to the earlier literature for its ideals is found in a little book of the latter part of the fifteenth century called *La forme des tournois au temps du Roy Uter et du Roy Artus*,³ a work which writers on the tournament appear to be aware of only through a partial summary made by Colombière.⁴ A letter from Jean de Bourbon to his brother, Pierre, which precedes the work, describes the composition as

... ung petit livret ou est la forme que on tenoit aux tournoys et assemblees que l'on faisoit du temps du Roi Artus au Royaulme de la Grant Bretagne.⁵

This publication, sometimes called 'Le petit formulaire,' consists, as the letter suggests, of rules for tournaments collected from Arthurian romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶ An examination of the thirty-two pages will show that the author really sets up a form for tournaments by making generalizations from tournaments of romance. For example, the tournament field and its surroundings in the time of Arthur are described as follows:

Se lieu estoit esleu pres de ville ou chastel ou grant cite assis sur riviére et boys et tellement que la ville estoit volentiers fermeure dung coste et le boys ou riviére daultre. Apres fermoit les deux boutz des lices et derrier les dites lices estoient les tentes et pavillons des deux princes qui devoient frapper le tournoy et chacun avoit loy dentrer dedans la dicte ville pour querir armes et chevaulx et aultres choses ad ce necessaires.⁷

Imitation had become complete, and the real life and spirit of the tournament was dead when the tournament sought its form or combat in literature centuries old.

Finally, William Caxton, bemoaning the decline of chivalry and wishing to inspire knights to valorous action, advises them to read about Lancelot, Galahad, Perceval, and other Arthurian knights and to imitate their action.⁸

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¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82. ² Cripps-Cay, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

³ *La forme des tournois au temps du Roy Uter et du Roy Artus suivie de l'armorial des chevaliers de la table ronde*, ed. Comte de Blagny (Caen, 1897), p. 10.

⁴ Colombière, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-42.

⁵ *La forme des tournois au temps du Roy Uter*, p. 39.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-74. ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁸ *Book of the Ordre of Chyualry*, trans. by William Caxton, edited by A. T. P. Byles (E.E.T.S., London, 1926), CLXVIII, 121-122.

